
Title: The Dark Path - Volume II.

Author: Annatar.

THE MENTOR MAGE

Thus he discovers the next portion of the Magician's road - instruction in the magical arts. Rare is the magician who is self-initiated, who has traveled the path without a mentor. For most initiates, this segment must be undertaken with a spiritual mentor, if only for sanity and survival.

The student-mentor relationship varies from tradition to tradition. Always, however, it falls to the mentor to take responsibility for the bond, to prepare her student for his new role. Some masters may be kind, others abusive; each mentor's duty is sacred, though, and difficult. The untrained student is a pile of clay that, in time, must mold itself. The mentor must teach his student how to transform from clay to a vessel of knowledge. Through this transmission, magic survives.

The first step often involves physical, menial labor. Humility and discipline - both of

which are particularly hard to develop in the modern age - are essential tools for the aspiring magician. Through the mentor's direction, the pupil learns these qualities, often at the end of a broom!

Some traditions - particularly shamanic societies and religious orders - believe that gods or spirits instruct the student. Meditations, fasts and ordeals open the channel for the spirit's arrival. Even then, a mortal teacher must show the initiate the way. A Hermit must guide her student down the road she has walked herself.

This is a period of learning and unlearning. The student must dissolve many misconceptions he once held - concepts that are enough to sustain people blind to the Otherworld, but that prove too thin for initiates of the magical arts. notions of cosmology, of the spirit, of man's destiny and his relationship with the maker must be questioned, overturned, reilluminated and ultimately reinstated. A center must be provided for the magician's reference and return, and some force must drive him. By compelling the student to solve seemingly unsolvable puzzles, the mentor

breaks her student's
mental constructs,
then reshapes them
again.

In many magical
traditions, these new
notions still have some
cultural basis: Magic
does not develop in a
vacuum. Even though
many sorcerers
develop heterodox
ideas, their practices
often remain rooted in
their home culture.

Thus, it is that some
magicians develop
skewed ethics.
When "right" and
"wrong" seems to
become meaningless
concepts, the
sorcerers decides
they must be
abandoned, along with
old notions of guilt,
responsibility and
taboo. Indeed, there is
some truth in that
abandonment; even so,
just has old concepts
must be unlearned,
new and greater
notions of
responsibility must be
learned as well. In
the iconoclastic rush,
many students forget
this step.

Pity the initiate who
never progresses
beyond this stage -
and pity the magicians
who fall back for any
number of reasons,
from a lack of
discipline to an
inability to discern the
truth. For they have
seen now the world of
magic. and they are a
part of it, but they
exercise no control
over the Black Art,
and they are
powerless before it.

...ooOoOoo...

